



P.O. Box 95085, Lincoln, NE 68509-5085, Phone 402.471.2867, Fax 402.471.3064  
Email: [energy@nebraska.gov](mailto:energy@nebraska.gov) Web Site: [www.neo.ne.gov](http://www.neo.ne.gov)

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For More Information Contact:  
Jerry Loos (402) 471-3356

## **ENERGY OFFICE GETS \$186,200 GRANT FOR UNL EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP Grant to Accelerate Use of Energy Efficiency Technologies**

LINCOLN – The Nebraska Energy Office was awarded up to \$186,195 by the U.S. Department of Energy to establish a partnership with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension to accelerate the use of energy efficiency and emerging energy technologies for homes, business, farms and ranches through several pilot projects:

- Develop the methodology for an energy and efficiency rating system for irrigation system components modeled after the ENERGY STAR® rating system and increase the awareness of the benefits of purchasing energy efficient systems for agricultural purposes.
- Expand the Nebraska Agricultural Water Management Network's proven water and energy savings functions and extend technical assistance and the pioneering efforts.
- Supplement current training and education on the recently adopted 2009 International Energy Conservation Code and residential weatherization assistance through innovative education methods across Nebraska.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, only three projects were selected from 20 states submitting proposals.

"Energy efficiency ratings for irrigation system components would be a first," said Ginger Willson, Director of the Nebraska Energy Office. "There are ENERGY STAR® ratings for appliances, homes and systems, but nothing to help the nation's farmers. Growing up on a Nebraska farm, I know first-hand that reducing energy use can make an agricultural operation more profitable. The Energy Office worked with UNL Extension on agricultural energy projects in the 1980s. We're pleased to join with them again on projects that can help Nebraskans save energy, water and dollars."

Nebraska ranks first nationally in total irrigated acres with approximately nine million acres. Irrigation is primarily from groundwater and requires submerged wells and a large power source to pump the water. Currently, more than 50 percent of these systems use electricity and the number is rising. Irrigation pumping is a large expense for the producers and is also a large peak electrical load that occurs at peak air conditioning time during the summer.

"Expansion of the successful Agricultural Water Management Network (NAWMN) will help more farmers adopt irrigation management tools that reduce water pumped and energy used. One acre-inch less water pumped saves the equivalent of 2.5 gallons of diesel fuel on average in Nebraska. Farmers participating in the NAWMN program have documented an average savings of 260 acre-inches of water and the equivalent of 650 gallons of diesel fuel on a quarter section pivot." according to Suat Irmak, soil and water resources engineering specialist of University of Nebraska-Lincoln .

### **A History of Seeking Non-State Funding: \$1.3 million**

Since 2006, the Nebraska Energy Office has received 24 competitive grants from several national and regional sources totaling more than \$1.385 million, not including *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* funding.

The Nebraska Energy Office was created in 1977 to promote the efficient, economic and environmentally responsible use of energy. It is an authoritative voice and comprehensive resource center for energy issues in the State of Nebraska. In addition, the energy office plays an important role in fostering new growth in our renewable energy industry and helping Nebraska lead the way in the new clean energy economy. For more information, please visit [www.neo.ne.gov](http://www.neo.ne.gov).